

Amdt. dated August 30, 2004
Reply to Office action of May 28, 2004

Serial No. 09/894,074
Docket No. STL920000094US1
Firm No. 0055.0039

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants amended the Specification to replace the attorney docket numbers off the listed co-pending applications with U.S. application serial numbers as requested by the Examiner.

Applicants amended claims 23, 24, and 37 as requested by the Examiner to overcome the Examiner objections.

Applicants canceled claims 2, 15, and 28 to overcome the indefiniteness rejection (35 U.S.C. §112, par. 2) with respect to these claims.

Applicants amended claim 27 to overcome the indefiniteness (35 U.S.C. §112, par. 2) and non-statutory subject matter (35 U.S.C. §101) rejections by clarifying that the article of manufacture includes code enabled to cause a processor to perform the claimed operations.

Applicants further amended claim 27 to provide antecedent basis for the database and workflow server in the preamble.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-39 as anticipated by Boden (U.S. Patent No. 5,930,512). Applicants traverse.

Claims 1, 14, and 27 concern generating a workflow, and require: displaying a plurality of graphical user interfaces (GUI) panels through which a user is capable of defining nodes of a workflow and associating at least one action and user with each node, wherein the defined associated user performs the associated action at the node when executing the workflow, and wherein multiple nodes define actions that process at least one object that is routed through multiple nodes of the workflow; generating from information entered into the GUI panels a workflow model including the nodes and workflow defined by the user through the GUI panels that process the at least one object; transforming the workflow model into a workflow definition language (WDL) file; and transferring the WDL file to a workflow server, wherein the workflow server interacts with a database to implement the workflow model defined in the WDL file in the database.

The Examiner cited FIGs. 10, 11 and col. 4, lines 55-63 of Boden as disclosing the claim requirements of displaying a plurality of graphical user interfaces (GUI) panels through which a user is capable of defining nodes of a workflow and associating at least one action and user with each node, wherein the defined associated user performs the associated action at the node when

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executing the workflow, and wherein multiple nodes define actions that process at least one object that is routed through multiple nodes of the workflow. (Office Action, pg. 5) Applicants traverse.

The cited col. 4 provides a definition of a workflow "process" as a sequence of activities that must be completed to accomplish a task, where the process is the top-level element of a workflow model, defining how work is to progress, which persons are to perform activities, what programs they use, etc. Nowhere does the cited col. 4 anywhere disclose the claim requirement of a plurality of GUIs through which a user defines nodes of a workflow as claimed.

The cited FIG. 10 provides a panel through which the user may select a workflow file to translate. FIG. 11 illustrates panel through which a user may select a process 432 and then select button 436 to edit that process. FIG. 12 illustrates a layout of the process and the activities, connectors, and other components for the workflow. The cited figures show how GUI panels may be used to display information on a workflow. See, col. 12, lines 10-30. However, nowhere do the cited figures anywhere disclose GUI panels through which a user defines nodes of a workflow and associates an action and user with each node. Instead, the cited FIG. 12 provides information on a selected process, but does not disclose how one may use the GUI panel to define nodes for the workflow as claimed.

Further, Boden does mention that if the user selects to edit the process, then a script may be run to modify the process. (Boden, col. 23, lines 60-67). However, the Examiner has not cited any part of Boden that discloses GUI panels through which a user can define nodes of a workflow and associate an action and user with each node.

The Examiner cited FIG. 12 and related discussion as disclosing the claim requirement of generating from information entered into the GUI panels a workflow model including the nodes and workflow defined by the user through the GUI panels that process the at least one object. (Office Action, pgs. 5-6)

The cited FIG. 12 and corresponding discussion at col. 24, lines 21-30 shows information on a selected process, including a graphical representation 456 of the process and selection buttons 440-452 that when selected provide additional information on further details of the selected process. (Note that the Boden specification in col. 24, line 21 mistakenly refers to FIG. 12 as FIG. 11). The cited FIG. 12 provides information on a selected process. Nowhere does the

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cited FIG. 12 or corresponding discussion in col. 24 anywhere disclose generating from information entered into the GUI panels a workflow model including the nodes and workflow defined by the user through the GUI panels that process the at least one object.

Claims 3-13, 16-26, and 29-39 are patentable over the cited art because they depend from claims 1, 14, and 27, respectively, which are patentable over the cited art for the reasons discussed above. Moreover, the below discussed claims provide additional grounds of patentability over the cited art.

Claims 3, 16, and 29 depend from claims 1, 14, and 27 and further require that one displayed GUI panel illustrates a layout of the workflow including graphical representations of nodes and paths between the nodes to enable the user to manipulate instances of the graphical representations of the nodes and paths in the work flow within the GUI panel to design a layout of the nodes of the workflow.

The Examiner cited FIG. 12 of Boden and the corresponding discussion in the specification as disclosing the additional requirements of claims 3, 16, and 29. (Office Action, pg. 6) Applicants traverse.

As discussed, the cited FIG. 12 and corresponding discussion at col. 24 discuss a graphical representation of a selected process and buttons that the user may select to access additional information on the process components, such as the activities, structures, organizations, people, etc. Nowhere does the cited Boden anywhere disclose the claim requirement that the user can manipulate instances of the graphical representations of the nodes and paths in the work flow within the GUI panel to design a layout of the nodes of the workflow. Nowhere does the cited Boden anywhere disclose that the graphical representation 456 shown in FIG. 12 may be manipulated to perform the claim requirement of allowing the user to manipulate representations of the nodes and path in the GUI panel to design a layout of the node. Nowhere does the cited Boden anywhere disclose such manipulation of the process shown in FIG. 12.

Accordingly, the requirements of claims 3, 16, and 29 provide additional grounds of patentability over the cited art.

Claim 4, 17, and 30 depend from claims 3, 16, and 29 and further require that at least one graphical representation represents a work node, wherein for each graphical representation of the

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work node added to the GUI panel, and further requires displaying a GUI panel including fields in which the user associates the at least one user and action with the work node.

The Examiner cited FIG. 12 of Boden and the corresponding discussion in the specification as disclosing the additional requirements of claims 4, 17, and 30. (Office Action, pgs. 6-7) Applicants traverse.

As discussed, the cited FIG. 12 and corresponding discussion at col. 24 provide a graphical representation of a selected process and buttons that the user may select to access additional information on the process components, such as the activities, structures, organizations, people, etc. Nowhere does the cited FIG. 12 and cited discussion at col. 24 in Boden anywhere disclose that when adding a graphical representation of a work node to the GUI panel, displaying a GUI panel including fields in which the user associates the at least one user and action with the work node. Nowhere does the cited Boden anywhere disclose that a GUI panel is displayed when adding a node to a graphical representation of the nodes as claimed. Instead, the cited FIG. 12 provides information on a process, but does not disclose the claim requirements concerning displaying a GUI panel including fields in which the user associates the at least one user and action when adding a graphical representation of a work node to the GUI panel.

Accordingly, the requirements of claims 4, 17, and 30 provide additional grounds of patentability over the cited art.

Claims 5, 18, and 31 depend from claims 3, 16, and 29 and further require that at least one graphical representation represents a user exit node, and that for each graphical representation of the user exit node added to the GUI panel, displaying a GUI panel including fields in which the user associates at least one action to be performed in the background, wherein the workflow proceeds to the next node while the associated at least one background action is performed.

The Examiner cited FIG. 12 of Boden and the corresponding discussion in the specification as disclosing the additional requirements of claims 5, 18, and 10. (Office Action, pg. 7) Applicants traverse.

As discussed, the cited FIG. 12 and corresponding discussion at col. 24 provide a graphical representation of a selected process and buttons that the user may select to determine

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additional information on the process components, such as the activities, structures, organizations, people, etc. Nowhere does the cited FIG. 12 and cited corresponding discussion at col. 24 in Boden anywhere disclose that when adding a graphical representation of a user exit node to the GUI panel, displaying a GUI panel including fields in which the user associates the at least one user and action to be performed in the background. Nowhere does the cited Boden anywhere disclose that a GUI panel is displayed when adding a user exit node to a graphical representation of the nodes as claimed. Instead, the cited FIG. 12 shows a graphical representation of a process, but does not disclose the claim requirements concerning displaying a GUI panel including fields in which the user associates at least one action to be performed in the background.

Accordingly, the requirements of claims 5, 18, and 31 provide additional grounds of patentability over the cited art.

Claims 8, 21, and 34 depend from claims 1, 14, and 27 and further require if multiple nodes lead to one node in the workflow, then the workflow server when executing one instance of the workflow only proceeds to the node to which multiple nodes connect when the multiple nodes complete processing.

The Examiner cited col. 5, lines 6-35 as disclosing the requirements of these claims. (Office Action, pg. 8) Applicants traverse.

The cited col. 5 mentions that an activity represents a piece of work, and that information associated with each activity indicates the conditions that must be met before the activity can start, conditions indicating when the activity is complete, whether control can exit from activity or the activity must be first confirmed as complete, time allowed for completion, who is responsible for completion and data required as input to the activity. A program activity has a program assigned to the activity. A process activity has a process assigned to perform it, representing a way to reuse a set of activities, where output from the process can be used in the exit condition for the process activity and for the transition conditions to other activities.

Although the cited col. 5 discusses how activities may have exit or transition conditions, nowhere does the cited col. 5 disclose the specific requirement that if multiple nodes lead to one node in the workflow, then the workflow server when executing one instance of the workflow

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only proceeds to the node to which multiple nodes connect when the multiple nodes complete processing.

Accordingly, the requirements of claims 8, 21, and 34 provide additional grounds of patentability over the cited art.

Conclusion

For all the above reasons, Applicants submit that the pending claims 1-39 are patentable over the art of record. Applicants have not added any claims. Nonetheless, should any additional fees be required, please charge Deposit Account No. 09-0460.

The attorney of record invites the Examiner to contact him at (310) 553-7977 if the Examiner believes such contact would advance the prosecution of the case.

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